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U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 4 Handbook 3  
Financial Management Procedures Handbook

## **4 FAH-3 H-430**

# **VOUCHER CERTIFICATION AND PAYMENT**

*(CT:FMP-81; 08-29-2013)  
(Office of Origin: CGFS/FPRA/FP)*

## **4 FAH-3 H-431 PURPOSE**

*(TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995)*

This subchapter provides the steps necessary for the certification and payment of vouchers. These procedures are to be followed and any exception must be justified and preapproved.

## **4 FAH-3 H-432 REQUESTS FOR DECISIONS BY THE U.S. COMPTROLLER GENERAL**

*(TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995)*

- a. A disbursing official, certifying official, or the Secretary of State may request a decision from the U.S. Comptroller General on a question involving a voucher presented to a certifying official for certification (see 4 FAH-3 H-433.5 ).
- b. All requests for decisions must be submitted to FMP/F/DFS/FO. If FMP/F/DFS/FO is unable to resolve the issue in a satisfactory manner, it will forward the request to the U.S. Comptroller General.
- c. The Comptroller General will issue a decision requested under 31 U.S.C. 3529.

## **4 FAH-3 H-433 STEPS IN CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

*(TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995)*

- a. Certification consists of verifying the legality of the obligation to be paid under the particular appropriation, the correctness of the information contained in the vouchers and supporting records, and the accuracy of the computation of certified voucher schedules. The certified voucher schedule is either transmitted or forwarded to the USDO or the Department of the Treasury for payment according to procedures established for each certifying officer.
- b. Payment is the actual disbursement of funds to discharge the obligation. The USDO, FMO, or Treasury effects payment to the payee after verifying the validity of the certification.

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**4 FAH-3 H-433.1 Verifying Obligation Legality**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

The certifying officer will verify the legality of the obligation under the appropriation and accounting data for which payment is requested. Refer to 2 FAM if a false claim is suspected.

**4 FAH-3 H-433.2 Verifying Information Accuracy**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

The certifying officer will verify the accuracy and correctness of information contained in the vouchers and supporting documents to ensure that there are no discrepancies.

**4 FAH-3 H-433.3 Computing Voucher Schedules**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

The examining official enters the vouchers that are examined on the appropriate Form SF-1166 OCR (magnetic tape and/or hard copy), Voucher and Schedule of Payments during the voucher processing stage. Voucher schedules must be certified and transmitted for payment, after the certifying officer computes the totals on manual voucher schedules or verifies the totals on system-generated payment schedules.

**4 FAH-3 H-433.4 Advance Notification for Large Payments**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

Certifying officers should notify the USDO or the U.S. Treasury of individual vouchers exceeding one million dollars before forwarding the voucher schedule to the USDO or the Treasury, unless the servicing USDO has established a lower amount.

**4 FAH-3 H-433.5 Signature and Date**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

- a. The certifying officer is not required to sign each individual voucher. Signing Form SF-1166 OCR, Voucher and Schedule of Payments, constitutes certification of all vouchers listed on the voucher schedule.
- b. Type, stamp, or print the name of the certifying officer and the date certified on all voucher schedule copies under the manual signature. When a principal officer certifies a voucher schedule in the absence of the FMO at a post, and the principal officer's name does not appear on the Official List of Authorized

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Certifying Officers, show the title, "Principal Officer," on the voucher schedule.

## **4 FAH-3 H-433.6 Law and Fact Questions**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

- a. If the certifying officer feels that a particular voucher involves a question of law, or there are missing or incomplete supporting documents, or there are facts which are known but not evidenced, the certifying officer should promptly transmit such vouchers in duplicate to FMP/F/DFS/FO.
- b. A written claim from the claimant in letter form, in duplicate, with the signature and post office address of the claimant is acceptable. However, when it is impossible to compute the exact amount due, send the claim to FMP/F/DFS/FO for determination.
- c. All vouchers must be supported by the originals of pertinent documents. When originals are not available, copies should be submitted, provided the approving official certifies each copy as a true copy. An approving official's memorandum transmitting the voucher should include:
  - (1) Reason the claim is believed to contain a question of law or fact;
  - (2) Administrative recommendation as to proper disposition; and
  - (3) Statement as to whether or not an obligation in the amount or estimated amount of the claim has been established and that liquidation will not be made until properly instructed to do so.
- d. FMP/F/DFS/FO will make every effort to expedite the processing of the questionable voucher. If a determination cannot be made by FMP/F/DFS/FO as to the propriety of payment, it will submit the voucher to GAO for a ruling. The post will be advised accordingly.

## **4 FAH-3 H-433.7 Other RAMC's or FMC's**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

Only a certifying officer who is listed on the current Official List of Authorized Certifying Officers may certify vouchers submitted for payment to a RAMC or FMC.

## **4 FAH-3 H-434 PAYING VOUCHERS**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

Procedures for paying vouchers using either manual or electronic transfer of data are stated below.

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**4 FAH-3 H-434.1 Forwarding Vouchers for Payment**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

- a. Posts are to forward promptly all certified voucher schedules to their designated USDO or FMC for payment. Posts using telegraphic requests for payment from a RAMC will retain such voucher schedules at the post.
- b. Domestically, forward all certified voucher schedules to Treasury.
- c. The USDO or the Treasury, after verifying the certification of records, will process the payment.

**4 FAH-3 H-434.2 Electronic Payments Requests**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

- a. The requesting post must have a certified voucher and a telegraphic request bearing the signature of an approving officer on hand before transmission.
- b. All telegraphic requests for payment and posts authorized to use the electronic payment system must follow the procedures and data formats as provided in the operating procedures of the servicing FMC/RAMC. Such requests for emergency payments must include an explanation for not using normal processing.
- c. Electronic certification of the final voucher requires that control procedures be in place to ensure authenticity of transmitted data, including the electronic signature. Such controls must provide reasonable assurance that deliberate or inadvertent manipulation, modification or loss of data during transmission is detected. When final certification of vouchers is electronically accomplished, the electronic sign or symbol adopted as the certifying officer's electronic signature must be initiated by methods that:

Distinguish the specific certifying officer; and

Are under the sole control of the certifying officer.

**4 FAH-3 H-434.3 Electronic Certification System (ECS)**

(*TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995*)

- a. An electronic certification system (ECS) automates the payment schedule (Form SF-1166) certified by a certifying officer (CO) from a paying post to a designated disbursing center (USDO) for automatic verifying and processing of payments. Designation and revocation for the use of the integrated ECS package of hardware and software by a CO is authorized by the Certification Authority provided by FMP/F/IFS and FMP/F/FMS.
- b. The ECS package and data being processed shall be accessible only to known cleared Americans with a need to operate or maintain the package (see 12 FAM). The control requirements cited in 4 FAM 434.4 shall be maintained to

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ensure authenticity of transmitted data, including the electronic signature for the reasonable assurance that deliberate or inadvertent manipulation, modification or loss of data during transmission is detected.

## **4 FAH-3 H-434.4 Treasury Financial Communications System (TFCS)**

*(TL:FMP-3; 05-30-1995)*

- a. The forms to be used in scheduling payments through the TFCS are as follows:
  - (1) SF-1166 OCR Voucher and Schedule of Payments—Optical Character Readable; and
  - (2) SF-1167 OCR Voucher and Schedule of Payment (Continuation Sheet)—Optical Character Readable.
- b. When the Treasury Department has approved scheduling payments through TFCS:
  - (1) An authorized certifying officer must certify all TFCS voucher schedules to verify that payment is being charged to the proper appropriation.
  - (2) Use the TFCS as the mode of payment whenever possible.
  - (3) The maximum dollar amount that can be sent in a single payment transaction message is \$999,999,999.99. Treasury will not accept any single payment request in excess of this amount.

## **4 FAH-3 H-435 THROUGH H-439 UNASSIGNED**